



Center News



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A Newsletter for Federal Child Care Centers

Fall 1999

The GSA nationwide network of child Care coordinators

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LEGISLATION PASSES!!!

Will Enable Federal Agencies to Use Appropriated Funds to Improve Affordability

Congress has passed and the President has signed the FY 2000 Appropriations Bill for the General Services Administration, and as part of that bill, an amendment offered by Congresswoman Connie Morella gives agencies the authority to use appropriated funds to make onsite child care more affordable for low income Federal employees.

For the past two years, GSA's Office of Child Care and Office of Congressional Affairs have been working with Members of Congress to investigate ways to make child care more affordable, particularly for lower income workers. For many young working parents, fees make on-site child care a prohibitive expense. While GSA centers generally offer some form of tuition assistance and local nonprofit boards undertake

fundraising efforts, some parents simply cannot afford to use our centers.

Federal agencies now have some flexibility in helping those parents pay for child care. The Morella Amendment instructs the Office of Personnel Management to structure guidelines over the next six months that will help agencies determine how they might use appropriated funds to improve affordability. GSA's Office of Child Care will work closely with OPM in the next few months.

To follow the new regulations see the OPM web site. From the OPM site you can click on Federal Register and then simply scroll down. Direct site is:
<http://www.opm.gov/fedregis/index.htm>

Energy Department Makes an Investment in Families

As seen in the Washington Post, the Energy Department is one of the first agencies to take advantage of the new legislation giving federal agencies authority to use appropriated funds to assist low income employees with their child care costs.

The department vows to make its two Washington area child centers (at the Forrestal Building and in Germantown) affordable for many lower-income workers. The department has said it will make appropriated funds available to offer child care tuition assistance to lower-income workers.

Energy's actions will hopefully influence other agencies to act on this new authority.

NAEYC 4th Year Merit Extension

The DOT Child Development Center, Inc, in Washington, DC. recently received a NAEYC Fourth Year Merit Extension on their accreditation status!

If your center has been accredited two times and have the same director and has low staff turnover then your center may also be eligible for a fourth year Merit Extension.

To apply you need to write a short one page letter to the NAEYC about the above three criteria. Add a paragraph on the improvements that you have been making in your center over the last two years (mentioning the suggestion from your letter of recommendation for improvements) and state that there have been no complaints that have been verified against your center. Enclose a current staffing pattern and changes in your staff qualification since your last visit and mail to NAEYC. Good Luck!

Child Care Staffing Crisis

As the growing body of research continues to highlight the critical and far reaching importance of high quality early care for young children (Abecedarian Project, 1999), another group of studies has rated the majority of care for these young children as poor to mediocre in the United States (Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study, 1995). The juxtaposition of these two sets of findings is upsetting and stressful to working families who are made to choose between the jobs they need and the children they love. As more parents of young children come off the welfare rolls and into the workforce, the need for expanded services is often placed in opposition against the need for improved quality. In New York, for example, capacity building funds have remained virtually untouched because providers are reluctant to apply for money that would require them to find and hire additional teachers. The reality of this struggle is that centers can no longer hire enough qualified teachers to care for their currently enrolled children let alone expand services to provide care for more children.

1999 (Hourly) Salary Rates*

Preschool Teacher * (National)	\$9.09
Kindergarten Teacher * (National)	\$19.85
GSA Teaching Staff ** (Pacific Rim Region)	\$9.15

*Center for the Child Care Workforce, 1999.

**1999 GSA Annual Survey, Average Salaries for all Teaching Staff in the Pacific Rim Region.

The research on child care quality repeatedly finds that the most consistent and best predictor of high quality child care is the compensation of the teacher providing the care (National Child Care Staffing Study, 1990 and 1998). California (and now beginning in many other states), has reduced its class-size in public school grades K-3. This has increased the demand for teachers in the lower grades and has, subsequently, deprived the Early Childhood Education field of a huge portion of their degreed child care teachers. At the same time, the soaring economy and low unemployment rate has lured child care teachers out of education altogether.

Is the staffing crisis in child care effecting you and your program?

If you have thoughts about the staffing crisis, ideas for solutions or examples that highlight or contradict these trends, please e:mail them to: jennifer.kagiwada@GSA.gov. Input from our readers will be used for a follow-up article in a future edition of "Center News".



Kevin's Corner

As the architect for the Center, I am more than happy to introduce a column devoted to facility issues in child care centers and the importance of the physical environment in lives and development of young children.

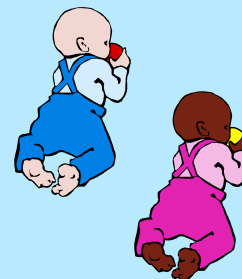
The design success of an early childhood environment can be judged by the degree to which it enhances positive interactions between young children and adults.

Environment influences interaction, or as Winston Churchill put it, "We shape our dwellings, thereafter our dwellings shape our lives." The "dwelling" we provide children for so many of their waking hours, helps to *shape* their experience, and their lives.

The Roman writer, Vitruvius said that successful design must include three equal and inter-dependent essentials: *Commodity* – the design has to work for the function for which it is designed. It must represent good value for money. *Firmness* – The built environment can't just be pretty

for the opening and then proceed to fall apart. Finally, *Delight* – It should be an enhancement to our daily lives, creating a place we love to *be*, not just a place to admire in a photograph. Good design must contain all of these elements and in roughly equal parts. For any activity as complex as child care, good design - commodity, firmness and delight - is anything *but* a luxury.

Next quarter, in a column I'll call *Child Care Lite*, I will explore one of the most essential elements of a child's experience: light and lighting. In the meantime, please write the newsletter with your observations, comments and questions to: kevin.kelly@gsa.gov



US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

Did you know that your child care center may qualify for a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks for child care facilities?

The CACFP reimburses participating day care operators for their meal costs and provides them with USDA commodity food and nutrition education materials.

To qualify, providers must meet certain eligibility requirements including serving a given percentage of children who receive benefits under Title 20.

For more detailed information about this program and income eligibility guidelines, contact your state agency that administers this program, usually the Department of Education.

For more information also see the Child and Adult Food Program Website at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/

MORE WEB SITES:

Federal Resources for Afterschool Programs
www.afterschool.gov

National Center for the Child
Care Workforce
www.ccw.org



Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov

Office of Personnel Management
www.opm.gov

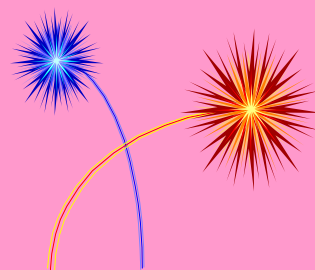
American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org

National Child Care Information Center
<http://nccic.org>

Great Lakes Center Celebrates a 10th Anniversary

The FAA O'Hare Child Development Center, operated by Lutheran General Children's Day Care Services (LGCDC), recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary. The celebration included all the children, parents, staff, administrators, board members and agency officials. The highlight of the event was a "home video" featuring a day in the life of the center. Shown on a big screen all the children enjoyed seeing each other on TV. Cecelia Beltrano, a teacher at the center for its entire 10 year history, was chosen to blow out the candles on the cake.

The Center cares for children six weeks to five years old and has a full time capacity of 67 children. Through its partnership with Advocate-Lutheran General Hospital (LGH) and the many hospital employees it also serves, actual enrollment is 83 children.



The center operates with 18 staff and two full time administrators. Seven center educators have been with the center for over five years. The center achieved NAEYC accreditation in 1993 and has maintained its accreditation.

Their commitment to provide the highest quality education to federally employed families, LGH associate families and community families has only deepened during the years. Thank you and congratulations on the 10 great years LGCDC O'Hare!



Pictured at the 10 year Celebration, from left to right: Josie Disterhopf, Executive Director; Debra Lindgren, Program Coordinator; and Cecelia Beltrano, 10 year teacher.

Of the GSA centers eligible for NAEYC accreditation, 77% are accredited

Congratulations to the following centers on their recent accreditations: Richmond Magic Years, Richmond, CA; Kids on Broadway, San Diego, CA; Little Aviators, Renton, WA.; MSCTCC Child Development Center, IRS Memphis, TN; AFC Child Enrichment Center, Atlanta, GA.

Congratulations to the following centers on their recent re-accreditations: Lutheran General Children's Day Care Services, Des Plaines, IL; Uncle Sam's, St. Louis, MO; Rainbow Castle, St. Louis, MO; Just Us Kids, Washington, DC; Federal Children's Center, Herndon, VA



In Memoriam...Dr. Anita Rui Olds

I have built a monument more lasting than bronze..." Horace

The GSA child care community notes with sorrow the untimely death of Dr Anita Rui Olds in September of this year. Anita was a successful advocate for the importance of nurturing environments. Her talk at the 1997 GSA Annual Conference and at the 1998 NAEYC Conference were inspirational. Anita consulted on several GSA child care center designs, GSA's first Child Care Design Guide, and her ideas continue to strongly influence the current 1998 revision.

For those of us fortunate enough to attend the Child Care Design Institute which Anita conceived and ran at Harvard/Tufts and at University of Oregon, the designs of space for children was imbued with a new significance. We remember Anita's often-repeated, marvelously compelling statistic that a child spends over 12,000 hours of early life in a child care center; we were instilled with a renewed sense of responsibility for the quality of that experience. Anita Olds' designs, especially the center at the Husky Corporation in Canada, were an inspiring example of sensitive response to the deepest needs of children. In short, Anita was a pioneer: her example and her ideas are alive and cannot but influence us as we strive for excellence in children's lives.

GSA child Care Operations Center of expertise

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Contributions and
Comments on
Center News are welcome
and encouraged.

New Center opens in Brookhaven, New York!

We are proud to announce the opening of BSC Kids Place in Brookhaven, New York on November 1, 1999 for the Internal Revenue Service. Innovative Learning Centers, Inc. was selected as the provider. They are also the provider in two other regional centers.

The free standing facility will accommodate 74 children in six classrooms with a multi-purpose room. The play ground is visible from each classroom, and child height windows provide a flood of natural light and a "green" view.

